

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 DOHA 000562

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: U/S JOSEPH MEETING ON IRAN WITH MINISTER OF STATE  
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

REF: DOHA 558

Classified By: Ambassador Chase Untermeyer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary. Undersecretary for Arms Control and International Security Robert Joseph told Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ahmed al-Mahmoud that Iran was approaching the "point of no return" on its nuclear program, after which it will be much more difficult and costly to stop the country from building a weapon. Mahmoud said that "people on the street" question U.S. policy in the region because of recent cooperation with India and ending support for the Palestinian Authority. He said Qatar wants a peaceful, political solution with Iran that does not jeopardize its bright economic future. We don't know what to do, he said. He also expressed the concern that reports of a U.S. dialogue with Iran in Baghdad could undermine Qatar if it were to take a tougher line. See reftel for U/S Joseph's meeting with Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Undersecretary Robert Joseph, accompanied by Admiral Robert Moeller, NSC staff assistant Nikhil Ramchand, and Ambassador Untermeyer met with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ahmed al-Mahmoud April 10 to discuss Iran. Al-Mahmoud was accompanied by the Assistant Minister for Follow-Up Affairs, Mohamed al-Rumaihy; the director of the Office of International Organizations and Treaties, Adel al-Khal; and the assistant director of the Office of American and European Affairs. The meeting was followed later that evening by a meeting with Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani, at the urging of Ambassador Untermeyer (reftel).

¶3. (S) U/S Joseph said that Iran is indeed pursuing a weapons development program, despite what Iranian officials are saying. The evidence is with the IAEA and is also shown by Iran's centrifuges and large quantities of uranium hexafluoride. Iran's actions are associated with pursuing a weapons program. Iran is dangerous for this reason and also because of its actions in Iraq and its support for terrorism in the region.

¶4. (S) The U.S. is working hard to make diplomacy successful, the Undersecretary said. The next step is a Chapter 7 finding by the UN Security Council followed by possible sanctions. But we need to work in other areas as well to show the Iranians that the U.S. and Gulf states stand together. Actions could include an interdiction program; Gulf security meetings; and deployment of defensive radar systems. "We need to make it clear that if they close the straits, there will be serious consequences," Joseph said.

¶5. (S) Mahmoud gave a read-out of the visit the previous day of Dr. Ali Larjani, Secretary General of Iran's Supreme National Security Council. Mahmoud said that Larjani explained the history of Iran's nuclear program going back to the time of the Shah. Larjani said that enrichment is Iran's "right" under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty but that Iran is not pursuing nuclear weapons. Mahmoud was of the opinion that based on Larjani's tone, "it seems they're insisting to enrich." Qatari officials explained their concerns about leaks or an accident at the Bushehr facility; Larjani said Iran is taking 'strong measures' to prevent an accident. Larjani said that Iran is willing to comply with the IAEA but not endlessly without a limit. Iran is looking for a political, rather than 'legal,' solution to the crisis, Mahmoud reported.

¶6. (S) Mahmoud reported that Larjani used the "what about Israel" argument to question why his country is the target of international pressure. U/S Joseph replied that Iran had threatened to "wipe Israel off the map," making it a threat to international security. Israel is not a signatory to the NPT, whereas Iran is in non-compliance with this international agreement.

¶7. (S) People "on the street" also question U.S. policy toward Iran, Mahmoud said, implying that the Qatari government must factor in these considerations. He mentioned proposed nuclear cooperation with India and U.S. policy toward the Hamas government in Palestine as two examples with inherent contradictions. "For every point, there is a response," U/S Joseph replied.

¶8. (S) Mahmoud said Qatar wants the crisis to be solved politically and peacefully. "We don't know what to do: We

want to live in peace and build our future.... Who will protect us?" He explained that Qatar has to be careful of Iran, its largest neighbor. At the same time, "We have a strategic relationship with you," he said.

¶ 9. (S) U/S Joseph reiterated that Iran's actions threaten international peace. We will not allow Iran to reach the point of no return, he said. The cost will be to high to stop Iran after that. The U.S. is looking for "peace through strength." The Iranians must know we are determined, he said. There is a lot we can do defensively with the Gulf countries to signal to Iran that we are united. A strong GCC defensive posture will affect Iran's calculations, he concluded.

¶ 10. (S) Mahmoud voiced concern over reports of a U.S. dialogue with Iranian officials in Baghdad. He implied that this could undermine Qatar's position or that of other Gulf states. It would be good for everyone to know the situation, he said, by means of a U.S. briefing on the dialogue.

¶ 11. (U) U/S Joseph has not reviewed this message.  
UNTERMEYER